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Records Manager facing the demands of sustainable development and personal data protection: two important issues of the 21st century

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ABSTRACT: The 21st century is marked by various events that affect information from its production to its access and the activities and professions are impacted by the development of Information and Communication Technologies and the climate change. This article asks “what is the role of the records manager in the fulfilment of the sustainable development goals and the personal data protection?” Therefore, it aims to analyze the role and the skills of the records manager in sustainable development including climate change and personal data protection in the 21st century. The article presents a qualitative, exploratory and descriptive research. Thus, the article identified that the records manager must develop a disaster plan focusing on both analogue and digital records. The article found out that the responsibility of data protection is one of the functions being

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carried out by records managers. This article concludes that records managers should be considered to manage personal data protection because of their skills on organization's culture; because they know how the organization's recordkeeping systems work; etc. This article also concludes that records managers must talk about climate change at every level of their institution and add climate change issues to their policies.

KEYWORDS: Records manager; personal data protection; climate change; sustainable development; information professional.

INTRODUCTION

Events that affect information from its creation to its access and/or destruction have marked the 21st century. In this century, information professions are impacted by the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and the climate change. This raises concerns about sustainable development and personal data protection. As Pinto (2013) pointed, in the first decade of the 21st century, activities deeply rooted in age-old practices associated with information are thus suffering the impact of changes and are being called upon to face a challenge that is not, in fact, limited to the sphere of ICT. So, one of the information professionals affected by this situation is the records manager who has a great responsibility and very challenging demands.

This professional is concerned with ensuring information quality in sustainable development or about personal data. Records manager has knowledge and skills needed to ensure that data, information, and records are managed and remain accessible and useable for long term. This professional is critical to data work as including Information Technology professionals, legal specialists, risk and security professionals, health and business users, also senior managers or those who make decisions, who can advocate high-quality and effectively managed information (Shepherd & McLeod, 2020).

Considering that actions related to climate change give impetus to sustainable development and that combating and/or confronting climate change and promoting sustainable development mutually reinforce the two sides of the same coin, we understand that sustainable development is achieved with actions in favor of the climate.

So, the topic of sustainable development and the personal data protection has been raised for discussion around the world and in various areas of knowledge and as an object of action by different professionals, but it is still little discussed in information science and from the perspective of the information professional, specifically the records manager. Thus, in a global context in which climate change has been felt more and more and, at the same time, societies have been increasingly immersed in a digital world that risks their privacy, discussing these two intersecting topics through the records manager is extremely important in order to call the attention of records managers to the important role they play in relation to these topics, but also to call the attention of other professionals, decision-makers, governments, etc. to the importance of this information professional, in facing the demands of the 21st century, specifically sustainable development and personal data protection.

This article asked, “what is the role of the records manager in the fulfilment of the sustainable development goals and the personal data protection?” Therefore, it aimed to analyze the role and the skills of the records manager in sustainable development goals including climate change, and personal data protection in the 21st century. These objectives led to the design of the methodology used to conduct this research. In these terms, the research carried out is qualitative in approach, exploratory, and descriptive research. It is the result of a literature review and documentary research in which the data collected was subjected to content analysis.

Sustainable development and personal data protection are the concepts that supported the development of this article. The concept of climate change was discussed in relation to sustainable development. Thus, the discussion raises classic texts on these subjects and goes through the SDGs, as well as the GDPR. Therefore, the literature review is the necessary process to assess what has already been produced on the subject and, from there, to situate the contribution that the planned research can make to the knowledge of the object to be researched, elaborated with the aim of providing a theoretical framework for the research (Severino, 2017; Gil, 2022).

Qualitative research answers very specific questions. It works with the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values, and attitudes (Marconi & Lakatos, 2022, 2023). As indicated above, the aim of this work was to analyze the role and the skills of the records manager in sustainable development including in climate change and in personal data protection in the 21st century, an exercise that is appropriate because we have analyzed, not quantitatively, the content of the texts discussed within the scope of the literature review, allowing us to identify in these texts, the roles and/or skills of the records manager both in sustainable development and in the personal data protection.

Research differs from one another, and in terms of their purposes, they can be classified as exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory (Gil, 2022). Given the objectives of our research, it is classified as exploratory-descriptive. The combination of these two is because the purpose of exploratory research is to provide greater familiarity with the problem, with a view to making it more explicit. Exploratory research helped us to better delimit the research. As far as the descriptive part is concerned, this research identified the existence of relationships between “records manager and sustainable development” and “records manager and personal data protection”. They also serve to provide a new view of the problem (Gil, 2022).

According to Marconi and Lakatos (2023) the characteristic of documentary research, “[...] is to take as a source of data collection only documents, written or not, which constitute what are called primary sources” (p.202). In addition, they also talk about types of documents. Among them, they highlight written documents, consisting of official documents, parliamentary publications, legal documents, statistical sources, administrative publications, and private documents. In this article we used, for example, some reports from United Nations about sustainable development.

Bardin (1977) defines content analysis as “[...] a set of techniques for analyzing communications in order to obtain indicators that allow the inference of knowledge regarding the conditions of production/reception of these messages.” (p.42). Content analysis is a method of processing and analyzing information embodied in a document, gathered by means of

data collection techniques. It is applied to the analysis of written texts, or any communication translated into a text or document. Its aim is to understand the meaning of communications, their manifest or latent content, their explicit or hidden meanings (Chizzotti, 2000). We used this method to understand the role of records manager.

BASICS ON RECORDS MANAGER, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

In this section we discuss the notions and duties of records managers (records management), sustainable development goals and personal data protection, introducing in a more general way the relationships that are established between the activities and functions carried out by this information professional in the fulfilment of sustainable development goals and the personal data protection.

RECORDS MANAGER AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT

We cannot talk about records manager without understanding what a record is. Marsh et al. (2005) reminds us that records have existed since the first human found a way to record an activity or event by scratching a symbol on a piece of stone or daubing ochre on cave walls. So, the records manager's role has evolved from the Stone Age to the Digital Age, driven by changes in information technology, storage media, recordkeeping regulations, and the globalization of business practices. In the same vein, Schwaitzer et al. (2021) believe that traditionally, archival practice until the first half of the 20th century was limited to documents for permanent preservation, due to their historical, evidential, or informative value.

We would like to emphasize a couple of definitions of a record, which are useful for this article. Shepherd and Yeo (2003) understand records as a product of organizational activity, created during or after completion of the activity itself. The International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) has the "standard ISO 15489-1:2016 Information and documentation" which defines record as "information created, received and maintained as

evidence and as an asset by an organization or person, in pursuit of legal obligations or in the transaction of business”.

For his part, McDonald (2020) says that records refer to recorded information produced or received in the initiation, conduct and/ or completion of activities and that document those activities. He adds that they are a special form of recorded information or data. When well-managed, they comprise content, context, and structure sufficient to provide evidence of the activities. They include all forms of recorded information, including data and statistics, that can serve to document the activity. So, who manage it is a records manager.

The ISO 15489-1:2016 defines records management as “field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records. In this sense, McDonald (2020) understands that records management is the management function responsible for efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records. It enables ongoing capture and continued accessibility of high-quality, authentic, reliable, accurate, complete, relevant, and timely records.

It can be said that records management enables documents produced in any medium to be handled effectively and efficiently, considering their value to the organization and to society, based on an evaluation process. As Schwaitzer et al. (2021) said, records management is important because it allows records to be handled, organized, and disseminated effectively and efficiently, considering the values they have for the organization through document evaluation. And Beckles (2014) adds, records management should be recognized as a specific corporate responsibility within every organization. It should provide a managerial focus for records of all types, in all formats throughout their lifecycle, from creation through to ultimate disposal. The records management function should have clear responsibilities and objectives and be adequately resourced to achieve them.

So, a record manager is an information professional responsible for efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records. He enables ongoing capture and continued accessibility of high-quality, authentic, reliable, accurate, complete, relevant, and timely records.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In recent years, the issue of sustainable development and climate change has sparked several debates in various fields of knowledge. In fact, climate change is one of the greatest contemporary threats to archival repositories and the records in their custody (Tansey, 2015). However, it is notable that in Information Science it has not yet been debated to any great extent. Indeed, Oliver (2021) shows that much of the literature on climate change and its impact on cultural heritage is focused on built heritage. This demonstrates the need for more research on movable cultural heritage, and documentary heritage, and climate change. In this subsection, we seek to present not only the notion of sustainable development but also a regard on the 17 sustainable development goals (SDG) with a greater focus on the goal more specifically orientated towards climate change.

Brundtland (1987 as cited in Ross, 2009, p.34) defines sustainable development as “[...] development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. According to Yinuo (2023) sustainable development is how we must live today if we want a better tomorrow, by meeting present needs without compromising the chances of future generations to meet their needs. So, three different aspects must be considered: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection.

These three balls are distributed in the 17 SDGs. They are the centre of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, which provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, nowadays and in future (United Nations, n.d.). They are: No poverty; zero hunger; good health and wellbeing; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation;

affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation, and infrastructure; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; climate action; life below water; life on land; peace, justice, and strong institutions; partnership for goals.

The thirteenth goal on climate action is the goal we are focusing on in this article. It aims to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries; integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning, and improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

As can be seen, the information professional, more specifically the records manager, must be aware of these actions, not only to preserve records related to a variety of subjects, but particularly records that contain data and information related to climate change, so that natural and/or legal persons, public and/or private institutions, or even States will know where they stand in relation to climate change, whether in terms of mitigation or in terms of ability to respond to climate change.

The records are threatened by gradually shifting weather patterns and extreme events. An increase in temperature together with changes in precipitation, relative humidity and wind, for instance, can negatively impact on the materials. This is because a change in average climatic conditions as well as changes in the frequency and intensity of severe weather events can affect the biological, chemical and physical mechanisms leading to degradation (Sesana et al., 2018). Furthermore, where possible, paper records management processes should be as environmentally friendly as possible, as indicated by National Health Service (2023), this will help to contribute towards the target to reduce its carbon footprint and environmental impact.

PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

It's not news that in the recent years there has been a growing popular feeling that information about people stored and processed on computers could be misused. In fact, in 1996, Jones-Evans already said that it is fair to say that it is possible that an individual could be harmed quite easily by the existence of inaccurate or misleading information about him or her being held on a computer and transferred to unauthorized third parties at high speed and with little expense. However, protecting personal data is not just about securing it from unauthorized access or theft. There are also growing concerns about how even legally obtained data is used (Gulyamov & Raimberdiyev, 2023).

Bagatini and Guimarães (2019) also point out that by using computerised solutions daily, citizens have started to create traces of their behaviour which are interpreted as personal data because they refer to their actions and reveal physical or personality characteristics. This set of data is now a worrying product of the surveillance market, so the protection of users' personal data in archive and library databases has become a determining element, the preservation of which falls primarily to the information professional.

It seems that the emergence of the right to privacy come from the English Magna Carta of 1215, and it is associated with the rise of the bourgeoisie and the growth of urban centres. It is widely recognized, however, that the paper "Right to Privacy", published in 1890, drew attention to the issue by discussing the right to be left alone. Another point is that, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guaranteed the right to privacy (Schwaitzer, 2020). Nowadays, the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (2016) is the model that several countries use to legislate on the personal data protection, as is the case of Brazil with its General Personal Data Protection Law (2018). Analyzing this last one, especially its general principles Schwaitzer (2020) defends that who knows how to identify, access and restrict as well as best help archival institutions and memory centres to promote compliance with the law is the records manager.

Personal data refers to a set of information, data and metadata produced from behaviour in both online and offline environments, whose personal nature stems from the fact that they are created by and about a natural, identified or identifiable natural person, voluntarily, observed or inferred. It can be sensitive when it relates to aspects such as religious convictions, political opinions, sexual life, biometrics, genetics, health, racial or ethnic origin and membership of a religious, political, or philosophical organization (Bagatini & Guimarães, 2019).

In Jones-Evans's (1996) text mentioned above, the author spoke of "Implications for records manager working in sectors affected by the Data Protection Act" (p.33) and he pointed that the six important areas covered by the Data Protection Act from United Kingdom are social security, social services, the police, national security, academic records, and personal finance, although the Act impacts on all types of organizations in every sector. It's important to remember that a records manager could work in any organization and any sector, so this professional is largely concerned with personal data protection issues. So, records managers must, for example, be aware of the use of various technological tools, which can be used both to carry out their core activities and their support activities. Thus, although much of the personal data in custody in archives, countless others continue to be collected during its activities (Schwaitzer, 2020).

RECORDS MANAGER'S ROLE IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Having introduced the notion of sustainable development and presented the 17 sustainable development goals with more precision to the thirteenth goal on climate action, here in this section we specifically indicate the role of the records manager in the prosecution of this goal.

It is important to notice that records should document processes, decisions, actions, activities, and communications; protect rights and entitlements; inform policies and hold officials accountable for their actions. Any set of information, regardless of its structure or form can be managed as a record. This includes information in the form of

a document, a collection of data or other types of digital or analogue information that are created, captured and managed during business (Thurston, 2020). While data and statistics provide the essential basis for measuring the SDG, records contribution in terms of documenting processes, protecting integrity and enabling preservation is also essential. Records standards make it possible to extract, disaggregate, protect and preserve data, statistics and records documenting SDG measurements to 2030 and beyond (Thurston, 2020).

Therefore, the achievement and measurement of the SDG depend on the availability of trustworthy data from a variety of sources. Records, especially records created by government agencies, are often identified as one of the most important sources from which such data can be derived (Lowry, 2020). With stronger records management across governments, the data needed to derive accurate, reliable and authentic statistical information relating to progress on the SDG are achievable. Furthermore, the SDG agenda requires that these records remain accessible to 2030 and beyond, which, in the digital world, can only be achieved through continuous active management (Brown, 2020).

Records manager is a professional connected to the future, and sustainable development is a challenge that must be faced by investing time, money and energy into changing practices. It should also be noted that there are many guides available to assist records managers in developing a disaster plan specific to their institution and recover from a disaster. In addition to these manuals, there are also many online resources from professional associations (Oliver, 2021).

The following table is the result of analyzing the work of Shepherd and McLeod (2020), and Oliver (2021). It's pointing a series of roles for the records manager in sustainable development.

Table 1: Records manager's roles in sustainable development

Category	Roles
Legal, Ethical and communication role	Must talk about climate change at every level of their institution and add climate change issues to their policies.
	Must also make the institutions dedicate and prioritize resources to records physical spaces.
	Should share what they are doing at conferences, in journals, in blogs, etc. It will be vital to build a community of practice.
Technical and Technological role	Should consider how retention scheduling decisions could support degrowth collection strategies.
	Records managers are experts in risk analysis and risk tolerance through their work in business continuity and vital records planning.
	Should contemplate the possibility of moving or decentralizing records if their regional climate is no longer liveable. This may reduce the risk of losing entire holdings in continued disasters or extreme weather events.
	Must advocate for the inclusion of records in climate adaptation strategies at the municipal, provincial and national level.
	Professional associations should include sustainability as a fundamental principle guiding the work of records managers.
Educational and collaborative role	Must train new and emerging records managers in sustainable practices.
	Must impregnate practices with sustainability and resiliency so that future records managers would carry out their jobs and ensures the preservation and access of data, information and records.
	Need to develop profession-wide climate adaptation strategies. They can identify funding opportunities to develop and implement climate adaptation strategies.
	Need to collaborate with architects, engineers, conservation scientists and others working on retrofit solutions to increase the sustainability and resilience of buildings housing records. Need to consider climate adaptation planning across various sectors and collaborate with colleagues across professions.

Note. Adapted from Shepherd and McLeod (2020), and Oliver (2021).

RECORDS MANAGER'S ROLE IN PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

Above we introduced the concept of personal data protection, briefly discussed the history of data protection and gave a general overview of its relationship with the records manager. Here in this section, we look in more details at the role of this information professional in personal data protection. So, let's start by quoting Bagatini and Guimarães (2019) who

say that a records manager, as an information professional committed to social welfare, takes a preventive, proactive and constantly alert attitude towards the “traps” that can risk the personal data.

Lowry (2020) points that rather than simply reconceptualizing records as data, records managers, at least in their own professional discourse, might usefully be encouraged to understand data as records. Viewing data as records reminds us that data are shaped by their cultural contexts and that effective use and comprehension of them will only be possible if knowledge of their contexts is safeguarded. Or as Schwaitzer et al. (2021) point out, recognizing that data as informational units, needs to be organized in a meaningful way to be transformed into information; that information is only reliable, complete and authentic when it is recorded. Another relevant point is that, after the data protection legislation, it must be recognized that record manager is the one who can best understand that data is an intrinsic element of records, which requires processing and must be eliminated after the end of the period provided by law, and if this does not happen, the professionals may face the penalties provided for.

Lowry (2020) argues that the quality of the data depends on the quality of the original records from which they are drawn. The reliability, accuracy and trustworthiness of the records determine the reliability, accuracy and trustworthiness of the data and statistics derived from them. He adds that “poorly kept records result in inaccurate, incomplete or unverifiable data, which can lead to organizations wasting resources attempting to process or analyses data that are of poor quality”. In these situations, government can be misled into making ill-informed decisions with potentially damaging consequences. Therefore, the procedures used for records manager are essential for the control and security of personal data held by those who offer or provide goods or services and the guarantee of fundamental rights results from the effectiveness of a record management program and the effective performance of the records manager (Schwaitzer et al., 2021).

Records management has an important role to identify, classify and distribute company information assets. Especially in the 4.0 era where data and information are growing and exchanging very quickly. Records

management certainly requires its own information system, electronic data, and human resources who can understand how the development of records and information management in (Grataridarga, 2021). In 1996, Jones-Evans said that the data protection, whether in computerized or manual form, is obviously at the heart of the records manager's responsibility and the introduction of Data Protection legislation has an impact on records management that provide an opportunity to raise the profile of records management as a key business function for all organizations. In these terms, records managers must make a more detailed assessment of the legal and regulatory environment in which their organization operates.

So, the legislation may take different forms, and the details will vary from one country to another and organizations operating internationally will need to take account of the law in each country concerned. Obligations to create or retain records may be imposed by laws or regulations that are specific to a particular employment sector or a particular activity, and by the scope: privacy laws and laws on freedom of information. In many countries, systematic records retention and destruction procedures are also needed for compliance with privacy or data protection legislation (Shepherd & Yeo, 2003).

For example, one of the aims of records management is to separate records that should be placed in the permanent archive from those that can be disposed of, to guarantee control and the individual right of access to information, respecting the eventual and temporal restrictions for full access (Schwaitzer et al., 2021). Records that don't contain personal data or confidential material can be destroyed in a less secure manner. Jones-Evans (1996) advises, if in doubt, material should be treated as confidential and evidentially destroyed and not use the domestic waste or put records on a rubbish tip to destroy identifiable, confidential material because they remain accessible to anyone who finds them.

The following table is the result of analyzing the work of Shepherd and Yeo (2003), Beckles (2014), and Schwaitzer et al. (2021). It's pointing a series of roles for the records manager in personal data protection.

Table 2: Records manager's roles in personal data protection

Category	Roles
Legal, Ethical and communication role	Inform individuals of the intent behind the use of their personal information and the organization's commitment to ensuring a fairly and lawfully treatment.
	Carry out regularized privacy risks assessment surveys for records throughout the organization.
	Incorporate training and awareness about data protection legislation and policies and procedures in the training programs for staff at all levels. Take pro-active and preventive steps.
Technical and Technological role	Map the use of records in the system throughout every working group in the organization and give the right security clearance to only those officers who are authorized to access the records containing personal data.
	Use redaction methods to allow sensitive information to be visually blocked from unauthorized persons while enabling them to view requested information. Softwares are utilized to carry out this task with electronic documents. In the traditional paper world, the records manager would need to manually hide personal information on any data subject to data protection before supplying it to the requester.
	Anonymize, pseudonymize and use encryption, so that individuals are no longer identifiable, or the name of an individual is replaced by pseudonyms to prevent an individual from being singled out. The use of encryption as a security measure to protect sensitive data is highly recommended when storing records containing personal data electronically.
	Establish audit trails and conduct regularized audits involving the capture of metadata that would show who saw the record; who modified the record; on what date was the record accessed; who printed the record; who removed the record from the system or who attempted to destroy, alter or illegally export personal data from the record (electronic).
	Should seek to arrange records to facilitate quick retrieval and comprehensive control of records containing personal data by designing classification schemes.

Note. Adapted from Shepherd and Yeo (2003), Beckles (2014), and Schwaitzer et al. (2021).

CONCLUSION

Sustainable development and the personal data protection are subjects that fall within the remit of the records manager. As a way of better understanding it, the aim of this article was to find out in more detail

“what is the role of the records manager in the fulfilment of sustainable development goals and the personal data protection?” The role and skills of the records manager in the sustainable development goals were analyzed, especially the thirteenth goal on climate action, as well as the role of this information professional in the personal data protection.

Thus, the article identified that the records manager has essential role and skill for delivering quality information for effective support to international development and the SDGs. As we have discussed above through Shepherd and McLeod (2020), records managers have the skills to deliver accountability requirements through consistently applied records management policies and standards to ensure continued accessibility and authenticity of records in all formats through time. Records managers must implement information access regimes that are compliant with legal, regulatory and ethical practices. They are also trained trainers, so that they can develop information skills training for all organizational staff.

In terms of personal data protection, the article found out that the responsibility of data protection is one of the functions being carried out by records managers. This article concludes that records managers should be considered to manage personal data protection because of their skills on organization's culture; because they know how the organization's recordkeeping systems work; how to design classification schemes and retention schedules; etc.

Whether it's sustainable development or the personal data protection, records managers must work more closely with other professionals than ever before. So, this article serves as a first step in the subsequent article which aims to map the institutions at central level that have a records management program in Mozambique and check whether they address issues of climate change, sustainable development and the personal data protection.

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